

A child's pregnancy or parenting does not relieve her parents of these duties toward her. For example, although parents can arrange for a minor child to live outside their home, they remain responsible. If, as sometimes happens when a child becomes pregnant, they ordered her to leave without arranging suitable care, the department of social services (DSS) could file a petition alleging parental neglect.⁵

Minor children, for their part, are "subject to the supervision and control" of their parents.⁶ Here is an actual example related to teen parenting: A minor mother wanted to attend a hospital school to be near her infant in the neonatal intensive care unit. When her mother refused permission—also refusing to let her take the hospital's infant care class or her regular school's parenting class—the teen could not enroll in any of these.⁷ Thus, although the law allows a minor to act as a parent, her range of choices is usually affected by her status as a minor.

The law describes a child of six or older who refuses parental demands as *undisciplined*, defined as someone who is "regularly disobedient," "beyond disciplinary control," "regularly found in places where it is unlawful for a juvenile to be," or who has run away for more than twenty-four hours. (Pregnant girls are overrepresented among homeless and runaway youth. They may run away because they are pregnant or become pregnant while living on the street.)⁸ For anyone aged six to fifteen, the definition of *undisciplined* also includes being absent from school without permission.⁹ *Undisciplined* is a less serious status than *delinquent*. A *delinquent* minor is one aged six to fifteen who commits a crime or infraction under state law or local ordinance.¹⁰

5. G.S. 7B-101(15).

6. G.S. 7B-3400.

7. Review of medical records of North Carolina girls pregnant before age fifteen. (See "Preface.")

8. Telephone conversation with Julie Bosland, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, February 2, 2000.

9. G.S. 7B-1501(27).

10. G.S. 7B-1501(7).